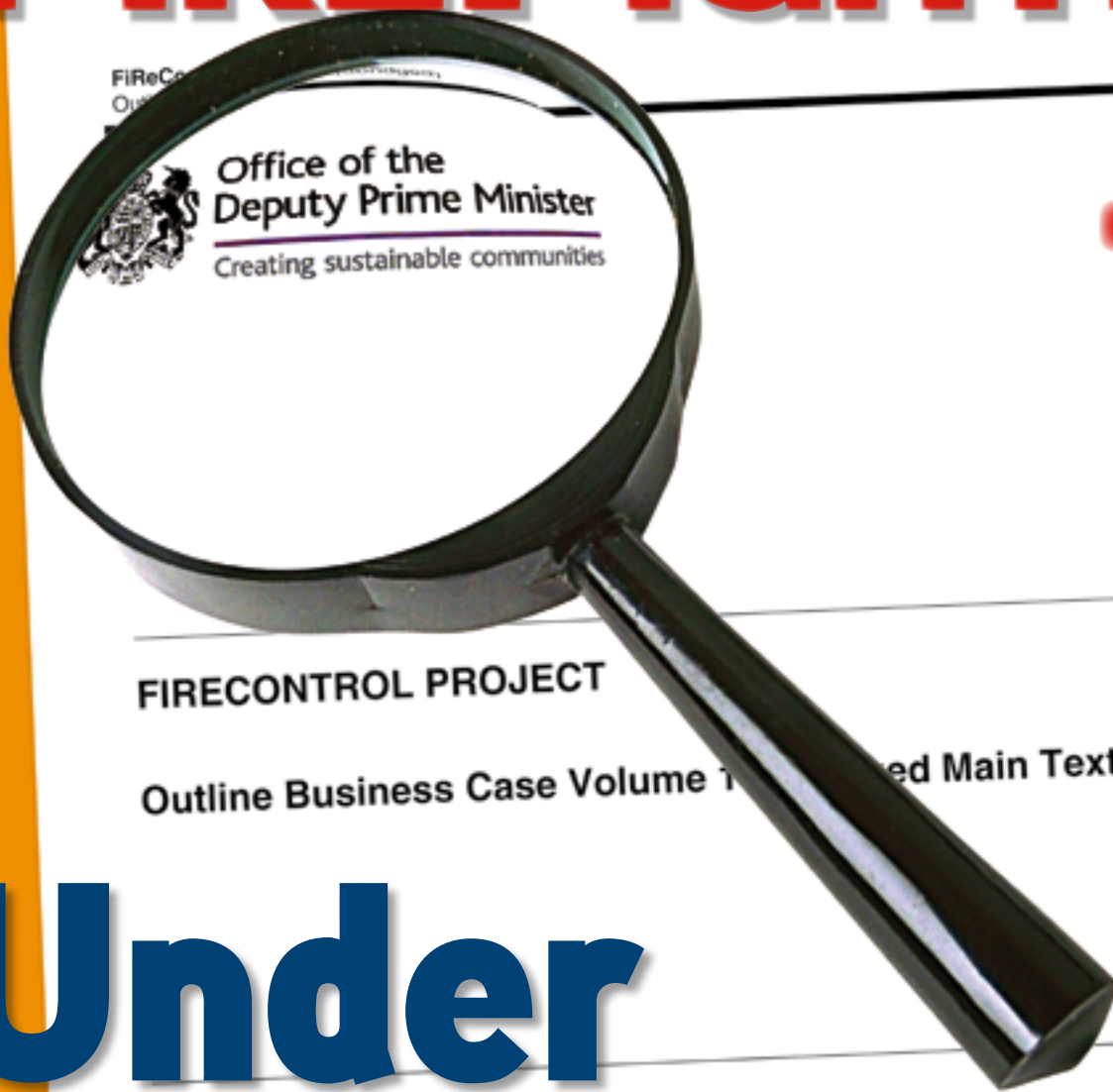


FIREFIGHTER

DECEMBER 2005



Under scrutiny

MPs will probe plans to regionalise controls



Cuts to service are not

AS WE go to press we are facing the first strike action in the West Midlands. This arises out of the fire authority's introduction of new shifts.

These shifts have been introduced as a result of a decision to cut fire cover at night. Various related issues have not been resolved. These are: the application of holiday arrangements arising from the new duty system; recompense for additional travelling expenses; and compensation for finishing shifts at midnight. As a result of the failure of the employer to resolve these issues our members have voted for strike action by a magnificent 76.6%.

This result clearly reflects the anger felt by FBU members in the West Midlands over how they have been treated by local management.

After the recent dispute in Suffolk, it is about time that management and politicians in local fire and rescue services realised that they need to engage in serious negotiation with our union. It is simply not acceptable to impose changes without agreement.



There is nothing modern about making cuts in emergency services and nothing modern (or family friendly) about some of the duty systems proposed, says Matt Wrack

Defend fire cover – and conditions of service

The background to the dispute in the West Midlands is the decision to cut fire cover at night and as a consequence to alter the duty system worked by our members. Sadly it seems that this issue is becoming almost an obsession with certain chief officers, firemasters and fire service politicians.

The last thing the fire service needs is a race to cut fire cover across the UK and to attack our duty systems. Unfortunately, all of this is dressed up as 'modernisation'. The truth is that there is nothing modern about making cuts in emergency services and nothing modern (or family friendly) about some of the duty systems proposed around the country.

The simple truth is that the best service to the public is provided by 24-hour cover.

If there is no attempt to reduce the level of fire cover then the requirement to change shifts and duty systems disappears.

I am sure that members anywhere who decide to fight to defend fire cover and current duty systems

modernisation

will receive the full support of myself, of the Executive Council and of members across the Union.

I am also well aware that if the public are ever asked whether they prefer a fire engine to be available for 24 hours a day or to be made unavailable at night they will opt for 24 hour cover.

As always, the FBU campaigns both for the defence of public safety and for decent conditions of service for our members. We have never opposed genuine modernisation. Indeed, the record demonstrates that the FBU has always been at the forefront of arguing for a genuinely modernised and professional service.

Modernisation elsewhere

The UK fire and rescue service is not the only area of public services to face cuts in the name of 'modernisation'. The government has adopted the term (along with 'reform') as a buzzword for their plans for the public sector. In many other areas the experience of the fire and rescue service is repeated. What we actually see is creeping privatisation, job cuts and a poorer service to the public.

We have never opposed genuine modernisation. Indeed, the record demonstrates that the FBU has always been at the forefront of arguing for a genuinely modernised and professional service

I was recently invited to attend the full-time firefighters conference of the union SIPTU in the Republic of Ireland. It was remarkable to note how similar the issues firefighters are facing there and in the UK.

That common experience is one key reason why our union needs to work with firefighters' organisations in Europe and elsewhere.

MPs to probe control regionalisation 10

The Union's sustained political campaign pays off with a parliamentary inquiry into the control project



Strike over shift change 5

West Midlands members strike over compensation for working anti-social hours and additional travel costs linked to new shift system

Pension proposals 'back-to-front' 8

The Union has called on the government to rethink its proposals for changes to firefighters' pensions

NO to the BNP 12

Firefighter assesses the progress of the Union's campaign

Lies, damn lies and statistics 20

Integrated Re-classification Management Planning

Members are resolute over ambulance duties

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FBU members are standing firm against the bully-boy tactics of their fire authority which has started moves to deduct 10 per cent of their pay for refusing to carry out ambulance duties. The move was initiated by Nottinghamshire Fire Brigade management.

In September, Nottinghamshire fire crews voted four to one to refuse to allow the imposition of ambulance duties on to their colleagues at Retford fire station in the north of the county. The ambulance duties – known as “co-responding” – would require fire crews to be specifically dispatched to medical emergencies.

The FBU has a long-standing policy of refusing to attend

Notts members are paying a minimum voluntary levy of £5 per week into a hardship fund to assist the 34 members at Retford. Details of the fund are:
Bank: Nat West Bank Plc
Account name:
Notts Hardship Fund
Account No: 68013868
Sort Code: 55 – 61 – 17

medical incidents. It feels this would provide a third-class service to the public who require trained paramedics on these critical occasions.

Matt Wrack, FBU General Secretary said, “This is a dangerous and badly thought

out proposal. Firefighters do not have the necessary training to be sent to ambulance calls. This is playing dangerous games with people’s lives. If there is a problem with ambulance provision in Nottinghamshire then that should be addressed but this proposal is just an attempt to solve a problem on the cheap.”

Ian Young, FBU representative for the affected station said. “As firefighters we have enormous respect for the skills and training of paramedics. People making calls to the ambulance service expect to see an ambulance with paramedics. This scheme means that the first people they see are likely to be firefighters – with just basic first aid training.”

Unions unite to oppose cuts in services

THE Northumberland public need more time and more balanced information about the proposed closures of four full time fire stations at Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth in south east Northumberland. The Union has called for the public consultation period to be extended beyond the 18 November deadline and said it would not do deals behind closed doors.

The move follows admissions by the county council at a series of public meetings that the plans are meant to deliver cuts and not the improvements they originally claimed.

Northumberland FBU Chair, Colin James said: “The public need a clear and balanced view of the options and honesty about what is behind these proposals. So far Mr Hesler, the chief fire officer, has tried to pull the wool over their eyes and given them biased and one-sided information.

“Mr Hesler admits he is biased towards his own proposals for two privately funded fire stations which would burden the county council with £10 million in debt. At the same time the council is discussing plans to close care homes for the sake of a few hundred thousand pounds.

“More than two years’ work and hundreds of thousands of pounds in wages and other costs have been spent putting together plans which the public don’t want and firefighters on the frontline say we don’t need.

“The public have a right to open and honest consultation and the county council needs to give more time to ensure this happens.”

At a recent public meeting, the FBU, GMB and Unison trade unions pledged to work together to stop the council’s cost-cutting agenda.

19,000 local people have signed a petition against Mr Hesler’s proposals to close the four fire stations.



7 July showed how LFB resources could be stretched

FBU welcomes London resource call

THE Union has welcomed the call by London Fire Brigade management for six extra fire rescue units and for a commitment to a new command station in Havering.

Calling on London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority to make the extra resources available, London Fire Commissioner Ken

Knight said they would make the city safer. More than 200 firefighters were called to central London on 7 July.

Mick Shaw, FBU executive council member for London, said the incidents of 7 July showed how the London Fire Brigade’s resources were stretched to the limit in dealing with a co-ordinated

terrorist attack.

“As difficult as those incidents were, they could have been much worse,” he said.

“They underlined the need for an increase in the brigade’s capacity to deal with such circumstances and we welcome the proposed increase in firefighter numbers.”

WEST Midlands members held a series of strikes in November after management failed to make an offer that would have offered a way out the dispute over compensation for working anti-social hours and for additional travel costs following the introduction of a new shift system.

Talks failed to deliver an offer that was satisfactory to members. In particular, it failed to satisfy the recommendations of the independent chair of the technical advisory panel (TAP) in June. They were:

- Application of leave in line with the national agreement
- Compensation for travelling to stations whilst working on early and late shifts
- Compensation for a midnight finish whilst working the late shift

Dispute management intransigence, as Firefighter went to press ahead of the second three hour strike on Thursday 17 November, the FBU put fresh proposals to fire service managers in an attempt at reaching agreement.

The TAP recommenda-



Strike over new shifts



West Midlands Brigade Secretary Pete Gallagher gets the Union's point across as members demonstrate (above)

tions formed the basis of the union's proposals. The union also suggested that the introduction of a 2 day/2 night/ 4 day off shift pattern system would address most of the outstanding issues involved in the trade dispute.

Pete Gallagher West Midlands Brigade Secretary said: "We have put forward some proposals which we hope will help resolve the dispute. The key is for local managers to stop ignoring the recommendations of the independent expert both sides called in.

"Those recommendations form the basis of an agreement. Strikes would not be happening if local managers had followed those recommendations.

"We already work one of the longest working week of anyone in the UK. The proposed shift changes would force us to finish work much later and work more days in the year.

"We're ready for more talks to help resolve a dispute which we have never sought. West Midlands fire crews want this resolved as soon as possible but we are not having managers trampling all over us."

Regional Secretary Tony Nutting said that since management had brought in a new shift system it had caused no end of problems. "There have been several occasions when we have had 20 or more pumps off the roads because of staffing. Firefighters are often in the 'wrong' place because they're having to cover shifts at other stations."

More than 60 firefighters have rejoined the Union since the FBU held the ballot for strike action.

Community rallies to save retained stations and cover

THE campaign against cuts to the fire and rescue service in Hertfordshire is growing.

At a meeting with fire chiefs on November 11, 200 residents turned up to save Bovingdon Fire Station. The station, home to 10 retained firefighters, is set to close next April along with retained station Radlett. Watford would have a reduced service at night.

Jane Hogg, ward councillor for Bovingdon, Chipperfield and Flaunden, said that the proposed closure of Bovingdon Fire Station was a risk and urged a rethink.

Tim Marshall, vicar of St Lawrence Church in the village,

told chief fire officer Roy Wilsher and David Lloyd, the county councillor responsible for fire and rescue, that closure would "cut out the very heart of this community" and leave locals less safe.

The cuts are designed to save £500,000. Local Conservative MPs Mike Penning (a former firefighter) and David Gauke and borough councillors have opposed the plans.

In October, 100 firefighters, residents' groups, local councillors and Mayor Dorothy Thornhill protested against the cuts to night time cover in Watford with a march through the town.



Firefighters demonstrate in Watford

LEGAL ACTION OVER NEW CONTRACT IMPOSITION

THE FBU's London region has accused London Fire Brigade bosses of flouting contract law by unilaterally imposing new contracts on employees.

Every FBU member in London recently received through the post a copy of a new contract of employment from LFEPA.

The union has refused to recognise the new contracts, as there are, in parts, significant differences from existing contracts that have not been agreed.

Under contract law, employers are obliged to negotiate and seek agreement on any proposed changes to contracts before their implementation.

The union says that no such negotiations have taken place and is seeking a declaration in the High Court.

FBU executive council member for London Mick Shaw said: "Once more, the London Fire Brigade has ignored its obligation to negotiate with the FBU and has unilaterally imposed changes on our members.

"I think the time is fast approaching when they will realise that they have pushed our members too far."

■ In an FBU consultative ballot, 3,217 London members, representing 98.5% of the vote, rejected brigade management plans to introduce new 12-hour shifts, saying they wanted to continue working under the current five-on three-off arrangements. The union says the shift changes will lead to reduced night-time cover and job cuts.

'Report all attacks' call to members

FIRE and rescue service stakeholders are to work together to review the issue of escalating attacks on firefighters and make recommendations for dealing with this dangerous situation. The Union has, meanwhile, urged members to report all incidents of violence and abuse.

The moves, which followed the FBU raising the issue at the practitioners forum of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), were given renewed urgency as attacks on firefighters escalated during Halloween and Guy Fawkes night.

A task and finish group of the forum will be chaired by the Chief Fire Officers Association. FBU National Officer Paul Woolstenholmes has been nominated to represent our members' interests on the group.

While the forum only has a remit for issues affecting England and Wales, HMFSI (Scotland) and the Scottish Executive will closely



monitor the group's progress.

It is clear from ODPM statistics on attacks on firefighters that it began collecting in April 2004 that there is both serious under-reporting and patchy reporting of incidents occurring.

It is important for the safety of FBU members and the work of the group to ensure that fire and rescue service brigade managers are being advised of, and reporting, all attacks on their firefighters, including incidents of verbal abuse as well as physical attacks.

Fire and Rescue Service

Circular 5-2005 – Fires and Incidents of Special Interest (FOSI), issued in February 2005, includes reporting details for all attacks on firefighters in Appendix 3 of the document.

This is a separate report which is additional to the FDR 1 system. To avoid delay in reporting incidents, details may be emailed, faxed, or even telephoned through to HMFSI in London by the brigade concerned.

FBU brigade officials will be raising the issue with brigade managers to ensure that:

- the information contained in Fire and Rescue Service Circular 5-2005 has been cascaded down to fire stations and watch level
- they are using the FOSI system to report all attacks on firefighters that occur in their Brigade area.

FBU members – at branch and watch level – are urged to report all such events and to make sure that attacks are being recorded and reported.



MORRIS BUTTERFIELD RETIRES

MORRIS Butterfield, a union official who played a key role in raising the profile and defending the interests of firefighters working the retained duty system, has retired.

The Executive Council member for the retained retired after 27 years as a retained firefighter.

Morris started out in the Service at Burntisland Fire Station, Fife, in 1978 and was elected branch secretary in 1985.

He became retained brigade chair and then Region 1 retained rep in 1993. In 1997 Morris was one of the four retained members who were elected to form a national retained advisory committee.

In May 1999 the Union rules formalised the retained structures and Morris was elected as National Retained Secretary at the Retained National AGM in November.

On 1 October 2001 he became the first ever Retained Executive Council member in the Fire Brigades Union and as such played a pivotal role in securing pay parity and other improvements in the June 2003 pay agreement.



Alex MacLeerie – getting into the swing of retirement



Big Eck retires

ONE of the Union's great figures, Alex MacLeerie, Scotland's Health and Safety Co-ordinator finally has hung up his boots, retiring after over 32 years in the fire service.

He joined the Glasgow Fire Service in August 1973 and has been a larger-than-life figure and official for over 27 years, initially for Strathclyde and latterly for Scotland.

His vast knowledge of all things health and safety, coupled with his forthright style, has served FBU members extremely well over the years and has gained the respect of members and management alike.

There is no doubt that his contribution has made a tangible difference to the working conditions of firefighters and

emergency fire control staff throughout Scotland.

His assistance to H&S reps throughout the UK and to national officials is well documented. He was widely recognised as being one of the foremost minds in the Union on health and safety.

As well as being an outstanding official, he has been a great friend to many of us in Scotland FBU. This was reflected at his retirement party. People came from across the UK to attend – members, officials and management, past and present.

The Union wishes Eck a very long, happy and healthy retirement. This Union will miss his talent, but will never forget the work he did and the joy he brought to the movement.

Firefighter slams authority's waste of taxpayers' money

A FORMER Merseyside firefighter whose 13-year career was ended when he suffered a catastrophic knee injury in a fall on a dusty floor, has hit out at the Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority for its "phenomenal waste of local taxpayers' money" in defending his claim for compensation all the way to the Court of Appeal in London.

Gavin Bassie, 38, from Crosby, who was based at the Old Swan Fire Station in Liverpool, tore ligaments in his left knee when he slipped during a physical training session at the station. He will never again be able to work as a firefighter.

The fire authority was ordered in March by Liverpool County Court to pay him £100,000 damages, after the judge ruled that the dusty floor had caused the accident and was a breach of health and safety regulations.

But MFCDA continued to deny liability for Mr Bassie's injury, even though the trial judge described the investigation into the accident as "astonishingly blinkered" and suggested that the investigating officer had failed to ask witnesses to the accident about the state of the floor.

The judge rejected the officer's evidence that he had tested the surface of the floor with his hands, and said it was "astonishing" that if that was the case it did not appear in his investigating report or witness statement.

MFCDA's own report into the accident was inconclusive, yet the authority took its efforts to strip Mr Bassie of his compensation to the Court of Appeal, which dismissed its case.

Mr Bassie described events after the accident as "horrible



Gavin Bassie: authority treated me as if I was the enemy



Les Skarratts: proud day for Merseyside and national FBU

and intimidating", with absolutely no sympathy shown to him by his employers.

"It was as if I had never worked for them, as if suddenly I was the enemy," he said. "They should have been helping me, not fighting me. I loved being a fireman."

Mr Bassie offered to come to an agreement with the MFCDA over compensation in order to avoid ever having to instruct lawyers and go to court.

"I suggested that I'd be happy with a couple of years' money. That would have been far less than I was awarded by the court. But I was told that their insurers had advised that my claim was immi-

nently defensible and that they would see me in court. "How much has defending my claim cost the MFCDA and local taxpayers? Much more than £100,000 I was awarded, I am sure. You hear so much in the press about the so-called compensation culture, yet all this expense could have been avoided."

Gavin says that without the support of the FBU he would not have been able to pursue the claim.

"The authority was so hostile that without the FBU and its lawyers Thompsons I'd probably have buckled. Knowing that all my legal costs were being covered was really important to me."

FBU brigade secretary Les Skarratts said: "This is a tremendous victory not just for Gavin, but for the FBU and all our members who with Thompsons assistance have been able to secure for Gavin a significant but absolutely just award."

"Questions must now be asked of the judgement of those who rather than helping Gavin in his time of need, thought it better to waste public money on attempting to deny our member his recompense."

"Our members are more than aware that defending our members' rights goes further than just negotiations and discipline but right into the court room as well. It is a proud day for the Merseyside and national FBU who will never give up fighting for people like Gavin."

Cornwall brigade to axe 15 posts

THE Union has slammed Cornwall Fire Brigade's announcement that it is to axe 15 operational posts if funding is not secured for 2006/07.

The posts, equal to 14 per cent of the brigade's operational staff, are being proposed to cover the deficit in next year's budget for Cornwall Fire Brigade. The cuts are detailed in the brigade's integrated risk management plan (IRMP) for 2006/07.

Terry Nottle, FBU Brigade Secretary said: "These cuts will impact heavily on the effectiveness of Cornwall Fire Brigade. The public expects community safety to be a central theme of local government but in Cornwall it will not extend to the provision of an effective fire service should these cuts go ahead."

"These proposed cuts come at a time when Cornwall Fire Brigade is already understaffed and struggling to cope with the demands of providing a modern Fire Service to the public."

"Any cuts in community safety and prevention schemes will inevitably result in an increase in the number of fire related deaths and injuries in the county. The people of Cornwall expect and deserve a properly funded, effective fire brigade."

"Cornwall FBU is not prepared to accept these life-threatening cuts and will vigorously oppose them."

"These cuts are so serious that we cannot rule out industrial action in order to protect the service and the public within Cornwall."

AT THE ODPM Firefighters Pensions Committee in October FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack, Assistant General Secretary Andy Dark, National Officer Paul Woolstenholmes and Ivan Walker from Thompsons solicitors met Martin Hill from the ODPM and other 'stakeholders' including the Chief Fire Officers' Association, the Association of Principal Fire Officers, the Local Government Association and representatives from employers in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

"The ODPM intended to begin detailed discussions on the proposed new scheme," said Paul Woolstenholmes. "Instead, we began with a detailed statement outlining our opposition to the proposals in their entirety – both the proposals for a new scheme and the proposals to amend the existing scheme. We set the tone for the meeting which discussed our position and a number of other 'stakeholders' echoed the Union's view."

The points made were:

- The FBU remains totally unconvinced of the need for a new scheme or for any need to change the existing scheme. The ODPM proposals would be detrimental to members of the service and to the service itself.

- The FBU is aware of the wider discussion on public service pension reform but the fire and rescue service is unique and cannot be considered without a detailed examination of the nature of the work within the service (eg physical demands of the job).

- The discussion on 'reform' of fire service pensions is back-to-front. The ODPM has, until now, failed to provide any detailed statistical evidence on the costs of the scheme, the rate of ill-health retirement and the average age of retirement. It is impossible to engage in serious dialogue without possession of the full facts. We insist that full details are now provided and sufficient time is allowed for the information to be considered.

- There have been a whole number of changes which relate to pensions in the fire service in recent years. These include measures such as changes to the appeals procedure and the re-deployment arrangements.

- In addition, various other changes in the fire and rescue service are likely to have an impact on pensions. These include occupational health measures taken within fire and rescue authorities. There has been insufficient time to consider the effects of these changes on the pension (rate of ill-health retirements, age of retirement etc). Indeed, there has been no serious attempt to measure the impact. A sensible approach would be to assess the likely impact of such changes and then to measure the impact over time. This has not been done.

- In the light of such measures the costs of the current

Government proposals 'back-to-front'

The Union has called for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to

rethink its 'back-to-front' proposals for changes to the pension

arrangements for firefighters and urged it to provide evidence to

back up its arguments. In a meeting with senior ODPM civil servants

the Union also said more time was needed if the promised genuine

dialogue between the various parties was to take place.

There has been no genuine consideration given to the possibility of members of the retained duty system joining the existing scheme

scheme may be very different from those claimed. Indeed the real costs of the FPS have not been provided by the ODPM. There has been no genuine consideration given to the possibility of members of the service working the retained duty system joining the existing scheme.

- The timetable proposed by the ODPM is rushed and is insufficient to allow genuine dialogue between the various parties. Prior to the general election the government had promised such dialogue. It now appears that there is insufficient time to discuss the proposals.

- The police service is far in advance of the fire and rescue service in developing a new scheme yet the fire and rescue service appears to be receiving very different treatment.

- The actuarial assumptions of the government in relation to life expectancy are at the extreme end of the scale and therefore exaggerate the cost of the current scheme.

- The assumptions which underlie the proposals are that the fire service of the future will be very different to that of today. They assume that large numbers of people will be employed without being required to undertake operational duties. There is no evidence that this is likely to be

HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS X



ANDREW WARD



PALEMPICS

ALL RIGHT FOR SOME: BOSSES

THERE is one group in Britain that has successfully held back the pensions cuts. They are Britain's boardrooms. They have been happy to tighten everyone's belts but their own. 400 top directors share a cool £ 1 billion in their pension pots. Even CBI director general Sir Digby Jones says that is wrong. But that hasn't stopped them telling everyone else we must work longer and expect less.

The TUC's Pensions Watch report on boardroom pensions shows that directors continue to enjoy pensions worth up to 45 times more than most staff pensions. The largest directors' pension in each company is worth £4.5 million on average.

Barclays chief executive Matt Barrett (*above*), for instance, is not a member of the bank's main pension scheme but instead has benefits paid into a notional fund outside the scheme. In 2004 the company contributed £990,000 to this fund.

the case. Indeed a number of key stakeholders have identified this as a problem with the proposals.

- There is evidence that ill-health retirements have declined in recent years. The new scheme, by requiring members to work for longer may actually increase the level of ill-health retirements.
- The ODPM proposals for a compensation scheme are still not available despite assurances throughout the year

that they would be published soon. In April 2005 it was stated that they would be published by June 2005 yet they still remain to be published.

- The proposals from the ODPM are being put back-to-front. Any serious attempt to address the pensions issue would deal with the current scheme first. A period would then be needed to assess any trends in costs as a result of any changes agreed and introduced.

NEW PUBLIC SECTOR AGREEMENTS

AN OUTLINE agreement on pensions has been reached by a number of trade unions with Trade and Industry Secretary Alan Johnson.

This agreement covers workers in health, education and the civil service. This would see no rise in the retirement age to 65 from 60 for existing members of schemes for those groups of workers.

New staff will get new schemes which will be index-linked to defined benefit schemes but they will have to work until they are 65 unless they pay more into their pension pot. Specific negotiations will now take place for each of the health, education and civil service schemes hammering out the detail.

The agreement did not include the sectors under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. These include Local Government and the Fire Service.

STATE PENSIONS – WHAT CRISIS?

A BUSINESS-led think tank has challenged many conventional assumptions that policymakers have made in the debate about pension reform.

Key among them is the idea that the whole system is in "crisis" because of a projected sharp rise in the so-called dependency ratio in the coming decades. This is the ratio of the number of people over 65 years old to those under 16 – which is set to rise by 42% by 2041. Instead policymakers should consider pensions policy in the context of total economic ratios, which measure the number of people working against the number of people not working. This is set to provide a much more modest rise of about 1%.

The upshot of all this is that a more generous basic state pension could be provided without significant tax increases.

Financial Times

MPs to probe control regionalisation plans

A WIDE-RANGING INQUIRY by the MPs of the House of Commons committee that scrutinises the work of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) will provide an opportunity to examine government plans to regionalise emergency fire control rooms.

The Union has welcomed the inquiry that was announced last month. Its submission will focus attention on the controversial plans to shut every emergency fire control in England and replace them with eight remote regional centres.

The move to launch the inquiry came about after intense political lobbying over a sustained period by the Union at all levels. This included the tabling by the FBU Parliamentary Support Group of one of the most well supported Early Day Motions in this parliament. Some 240 MPs have now signed the EDM or its amendment.

John McDonnell, FBU Parliamentary Support Group secretary, played a key role in the emergency services debate that took place in the House of Commons as parliament returned after the summer recess in October. He raised the concerns of FBU members, fire authorities and the public about regional controls.

John McGhee, National Officer responsible for the Union's political work said the inquiry was "a tremendous result" for the political pressure the Union had been building inside and outside parliament with the support from members and officials at all levels in the Union.

"The result is also testament to the work of the recently established FBU Parliamentary Support Group, which tabled Early Day Motion 229 (Risks Associated With Regional Emergency Fire Control) expressing concern about the implications of the government proposals and calling for an independent inquiry," said John.

"Members should be congratulated for lobbying their MPs, by sending letters and emails in their thousands and meeting their political representatives at their surgeries and at the House of Commons to press home the concerns of frontline fire service personnel and their families.

"It is important now that members maintain the pressure by keeping their MPs informed of the issues."

Geoff Ellis, National Officer responsible for the Control Campaign, said the decision underlined the effectiveness of Union's co-ordinated campaigning and called on members and officials to keep up their efforts in highlighting the campaign and getting the issues across to the public.

"The Union welcomes this positive development," he said. "This is clearly a big step forward for our key demand for an independent assessment. But, of course, we cannot pre-empt the outcome of the ODPM select

Union welcomes opportunity to

examine regional emergency

fire control plans as a sustained

political campaign for an

independent inquiry pays off



John McDonnell MP:
key role in emergency
services debate

committee inquiry."

The Union, including the Executive Council, the Control Staff National Committee and Regional Campaign Co-ordinators, will continue pulling out all the stops to equip officials and members with the means to push forward our efforts to stop these madcap closures going ahead. This will include an up-to-date campaigning pack.

"I encourage members to continue their fantastic efforts," Geoff said. "Attend branch meetings to keep up to date with the campaign and to make sure we keep up the momentum.

"That means building on the support we have gained among the wider public. We need to keep our friends, neighbours, members of the local community and fellow trade unionists informed of the dangers and great expense of the Government's plans, and encourage them, for example, to sign our petitions against regionalisation."

The union has meanwhile called on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister not to bind the government to further major spending on the control project until the inquiry has concluded. It said the government should press on with establishing a new radio system for the fire service as long as it is safe, works well and is cost-effective.

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack said: "We're pleased with the announcement and look forward to giving evidence to the wide-ranging select committee inquiry. We will focus attention on the controversial plans for fire control rooms.

"It's important that local fire authorities are frank and open in their evidence to the committee because many of them have serious doubts about these plans. The government plans have little support within the fire service.

"There are question marks over whether the massive

**The union has
called on the
Office of the
Deputy Prime
Minister not
to bind the
government
to further
major
spending on
the control
project
until the
inquiry has
concluded**



PAUL SLATER

Fire Control Operator Suzanne Reid collects signatures for the FBU petition against control regionalisation in Plymouth city centre earlier this year

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Keep your MP informed of the issues and any new developments in the campaign (MPs can submit written evidence to the select committee)
- Give every assistance to FBU officials to help the Union prepare its evidence to put to the ODPM Select Committee
- Get as many signatures as possible for the petition against the establishment of remote regional fire controls enclosed with this issue of Firefighter magazine.
- Attend your branch meetings to ensure you are up to date and to participate in the campaign
- You can also keep informed of the campaign and obtain campaign materials from www.controlcare.org.uk, the FBU's official website for the campaign.

THE ODPM SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

The Fire and Rescue Service has undergone a period of unprecedented change over the last few years, especially since the publication of the Government's White Paper, *Our Fire and Rescue Service*, in 2003 and the passing of the Fire and Rescue Services Act in 2004.

The committee has agreed to undertake an inquiry to examine:

1. The implications for citizens and the Fire and Rescue Service of
 - a. the introduction of Regional Control Centres, and
 - b. the introduction of and implementation process for FireLink radio services;
2. the progress that has been made on Fire and Rescue Service reform since the publication of the Government's White Paper of June 2003, *Our Fire and Rescue Service*, and the Committee's Report on the topic, *The Fire Service*, of January 2004. In doing so it will consider issues such as
 - a. fire prevention;
 - b. institutional arrangements and reform, including transitional arrangements and finance;
 - c. promoting diversity within the Fire and Rescue Service;
3. joint working between the Fire and Rescue Service and other emergency services.

During its deliberations the Committee will have particular regard to civil resilience as far as it relates to the Fire and Rescue Service.

£1 billion plus costs are value for money and whether the plans will work at all. There are dangers that council tax will be pushed up or the frontline fire service cut to pay for cost over-runs on the communications system.

"Government has an appalling track record in major projects like this. It is one of the most complex projects ever attempted and if they get it wrong then lives will be put at risk.

"The priority is actually establishing a new national radio system and providing proper incident level communications. Regional controls are a distraction from the real issues about how the fire service must respond to major incidents."

EARLY DAY MOTION 229:

REGIONAL EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROL CENTRES

That this House is concerned about the serious financial and service standards implications for central and local government and the Fire Service contained in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's draft Fire Control Business Case (volume 1); notes that within this report civil servants warned Ministers that there is a 'high risk' of 'total project failure'; further notes the Government's record on major information technology projects; and therefore calls for an independent assessment of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's final business case before this project proceeds further.

Andrew Dismore

FORUMS GENERATE DEBATE ON CONTROL AND PENSIONS CAMPAIGNS



PRESIDENT Ruth Winters and AGS Andy Dark brief members at an "open forum" meeting in Wales.

Open forums bringing FBU national representatives, members and local officials together to discuss the control – as well as

pension – campaign were organised in the regions in October and November. General Secretary Matt Wrack, Assistant General Secretary Andy Dark and President Ruth Winters attended the meetings.

Bob Blackburn, Executive Council

member for Yorkshire and Humberside, said that after an open forum in his region officials had received many calls commenting on how informative the meeting was and how the information was generating debate and discussion in branches."

In December 2004 the Union made a commitment to expel any member who was found to be a member of the BNP or any other far-right organisation and challenged the service to make the same commitment.

A year down the line Firefighter assesses the progress

GERRY MCCANN/REPORTAGE/ICOLK



THE UNION has a long and proud tradition of campaigning against racism and fascism – from Oswald Mosely’s nazi blackshirts in the 1930-1940s to the National Front in the 1970s and more recently a range of far-right groups, including the British National Party (BNP). Last year a major campaign kicked off after the Union discovered that an employee of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, a member of the BNP, was standing as a candidate in the June 2004 European elections representing the far-right political party and using his position as a retained firefighter to encourage people to vote for him.

The local community, the FBU and its black and ethnic minority members (B&EMM) were outraged and concerns were immediately raised with the fire authority. Local residents of Brokenhurst village, where the employee lived, were shocked to learn that they had a member of the BNP among them.

Lud Ramsey, chair of FBU Hampshire and B&EMM rep region 12, was involved in the campaign from the start. “The Union was notified by a member of the public that a Hampshire firefighter was standing for the BNP,” he says. “I contacted her immediately. She was livid. She wanted to organise a demonstration in her village.

“I was personally very angry that we had people like this in the service. Out of a workforce of 2,000 we had just three ethnic minority members on the payroll and the brigade was committed to ensure the service better reflected the community it served. It was bad enough that he was a member of the BNP, let alone standing in an election for them.

“We immediately raised the issue with the brigade management who argued there was nothing that could be done because the BNP was a legal party. So we went down to the village with a petition and gave out leaflets. We got 200 signatures in two hours. In the short time I spent in the village I couldn’t believe the strength of feeling.

“Because the employee was near retirement, the brigade hoped the issue would go away. We weren’t about to let that happen.”

Yet, by October 2004, efforts to get the fire authority to take a principled position on the issue were getting nowhere. (Hampshire fire service eventually took the BNP

FBU says No to racism

member off the run when he stood again, this time in the general election, although he remained an employee until he retired.)

The FBU’s campaign

The Union launched a campaign to highlight the anomaly of a community fire and rescue service with a racist, sexist and homophobic as a service deliverer. The FBU’s southern region EC member Dean Mills was a key activist. “We asked if the fire authority could deal with him under the discipline code, if appropriate,” he says. “He argued he had the freedom to express his own views. But what he’d done was use the fire service uniform to promote himself. We felt that meant that, by being part of the same fire service, we were endorsing the BNP.”

Every member of the FBU’s B&EMM national committee wrote personally to the chief fire officer of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, along with FBU officials from brigades including West Midlands and

Grampian and the National Women's Committee. But they hit a brick wall.

So the B&EMM National Committee moved the campaign up a level and decided to lobby every fire authority chair and chief fire officer, including the then Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) President, Alan Doig. They wanted to find out what their position was on members of far-right organisations or extremist groups in their fire and rescue services. Finally the committee wrote to the Commission for Racial Equality to request their assistance. The FBU's solicitors Thompsons also assisted in this work.

Responses from the 'Time for a Response' questionnaire were received from just 28 out of 58 fire and rescue authorities (see box). One response from the Chair of Wiltshire Fire Authority was particularly insulting. He said: 'I have no intention whatsoever of reacting to 'Time for a Response' from you or from anyone else'. Well thanks Mr Wilmott (CBE, QFSM).

Many of the brigades were seeking legal advice and, when it was forthcoming, their answer was generally:

"The policies of the BNP are not acceptable to many of the population but they are a legally recognised political party with a legal manifesto. As such current case law prevents organisations taking action against individuals on the grounds of their legally held political beliefs' (Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue).

Another frequent response received by the Union was: "We are awaiting guidance from CFOA on this issue."

So why are brigades so reluctant to take a stand on this issue? After all, the Fire Service Practitioners Forum, including representatives from government, fire authorities and brigade management agreed when the Union launched its national campaign a year ago that membership of the BNP and other similar organisations was not compatible with membership of the UK fire and rescue service.

"Although almost all of the letters stated a commitment to the promotion of good race relations in their service, most are still not prepared to do the right thing," says Sam Samuels, an operational firefighter and chair of B&EMM.

Determined to pursue the campaign, the B&EMM committee asked the CFOA to work with them on the issue. "We felt that their influence would be invaluable, given the responses received from a number of fire and rescue services. We also asked the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to take this issue on board with a view to getting a national policy similar to that of the police and the prison service – of zero tolerance," says Sam.

So what is the progress to date?

In September, CFOA director for Equality and Diversity Douglas Mackay briefed the FBU B&EMM committee on how the issue had been progressed. The Union learned that after discussions with the CFOA, Mackay took a paper to the Diversity Happens! programme board, a fire service forum, in March 2005, seeking a ministerial view and guidance on this matter. The paper was accepted by the meeting and it was subsequently decided that civil servants would prepare a policy paper for ministerial decision. The Union understands that the minister, Phil Woolas, is now in possession of that policy paper.

The B&EMM committee will also submit a paper to the minister to ensure that the Union's legitimate concerns are raised.



'There is no place for racism in football and that is the message that needs to go out to all supporters from all clubs'

**Steve
Cotterill
Burnley FC
Manager**

When the committee wrote to the CFOA in October they were told that the association would: "Encourage Government to take an interest in this matter as, if it is deemed inappropriate for a BNP member to be a Police Officer, then many if not all of the same arguments would apply to being a member of the fire and rescue service."

Back in the brigades, progress has been very slow. Just two have come out with positive statements – Avon and Gloucestershire. The latter's says:

"Not only are discriminatory acts illegal, they go against the core values we as a fire and rescue service hold dear. Racial harassment and incitement to such acts goes beyond the acceptable parameters of behaviour within Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service and will not be tolerated. Any member of staff who displays such behaviour through membership of any organisation whose constitution, aims, objectives, pronouncements or ideology contradict this duty to promote racial equality will be subject to formal disciplinary investigation, which may result in dismissal. This specifically includes membership of the British National Party (BNP)."

This statement shows a level of commitment from Gloucestershire Fire Authority and, although it remains untested to date, it is head and shoulders above the position of others, who refuse to even discuss the issue. The CFO of Avon issued a very similar statement showing that there are senior managers willing to publicly make a stance against racism. But not all authorities are sympathetic.

What about the others?

Dorset chief fire officer Martin Chapman put a proposal to the fire authority recommending that it adopt a policy of zero tolerance of BNP members in the Dorset Fire and Rescue Service.

He told the authority that:

- Failing to address the issue of staff being members of extreme groups such as the BNP would be in conflict with the duty of the authority under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- The right to be a member of the BNP must be restricted in order to protect the rights and freedoms of minority ethnic groups.
- His statement was lawful and compatible with the appropriate European convention.
- It was vital for the fire authority to engage with this issue in order to progress equality and diversity within the service.

But the fire authority rejected the chief officer's recommendation and refused to back the statement. It is understood by the FBU that the CFO was subjected to threatening phone calls prior to the meeting. The proposal would have made it abundantly clear that there is no place for bigots and racists in the fire and rescue service in Dorset. Instead, this decision was a coup for the BNP. The party's Bournemouth branch was quoted as being "delighted with the decision".

John Drake, regional official for the FBU in the South West said: "Dorset Fire Authority have not only missed a golden opportunity to come to a principled and morally correct decision they have also been bullied by the jackboots of the BNP. BNP members have a history of expressing their views with the firebomb through the letterbox, the nail bomb and the boot. They have promoted racially motivated thuggery, not political debate."

FBU Regional Secretary Tam McFarlane said that incidents of racism in the South West were growing at an alarming rate. "Our region has been targeted by groups such as the BNP who exploit and inflame tensions between racial groups and communities by injecting hatred and abuse into political campaigns.

"During the recent industrial action," he said, "reports were received of BNP and National Front activists turning up on fire station picket lines in the South West in an attempt to distribute racist literature and exploit our dispute to their own ends. They have always stated their hatred of all Unions and were immediately expelled from FBU picket lines by our members and officials.

"Dorset Fire Authority has rejected a statement which was lawful, necessary and had the full backing of both the chief fire officer and the FBU. The authority have pandered to the repugnant views of the BNP and rejected a modern vision of the fire service based on the values of equality and diversity.

"The message that this decision has sent to minority groups and communities within Dorset is appalling," said Tam McFarlane. "I urge the fire authority to reconsider their decision and join with the FBU, who will continue to press for a total ban of all members of far right organisations, including the BNP, from working within the British fire and rescue service."

Lud Ramsey knows from first-hand experience about the difficulties of challenging the BNP in the fire service and beyond. "From a young age I had to run from the National Front just because I was in the wrong part of London at the wrong time," he says. "That's one of the reasons I made a stand. I don't want my kids to go through what I had to go through.

"We knew as a Union when we took on the campaign that we were taking on the entire BNP organisation. The phone calls and emails I, and others involved in the campaign, received were horrendous. Their rules are intimidation and because of their tactics many people are scared. But more people need to challenge them."

The Union is determined to take the campaign forward and is urging members to participate.

"The B&EEMM committee would like to see a concerted effort from all FBU officials to persuade their chief fire officers and fire authorities to sign up to a statement outlining why they feel that far right and extremists have no place in the modern UK fire and rescue service," says Sam.

"We would also like to see FBU members exerting some pressure by writing to their CFO or fire authority requesting information as to why they have not made policies to protect FBU members from the virus that threatens to infect the whole service. If you are not happy with their stance do something about it. It's your right to be heard."

Members can find out where their brigade stands on the issue by visiting www.fbu.org.uk/workplace/fairness-work/index.php.

For more information about broader anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigning:

Unite Against Fascism www.uaf.org.uk

Searchlight www.searchlightmagazine.com

National Assembly Against Racism www.naar.org.uk

Let's kick racism out of football www.kickitout.org

Show Racism the Red Card www.srtcr.org



CHRIS WOODS (above), an FBU regional official in the West Midlands and long-serving firefighter, is one a number of FBU members active in fighting fascism and racism outside as well as inside the service. He has been chair for the past four years of North Staffs Campaign Against Racism and Fascism. The group, established 40 years ago in Mosley's old stamping ground, now has 100 members, including a number of FBU members.

"With my background in the FBU – with its equal opportunities and fairness and work policies – it was a natural progression to get involved in campaigning against racism and fascism outside the Fire Service and in my community," says Chris.

"We are fighting against the BNP and

the National Front. We petition town centres, do door-to-door leafleting and working together with other groups in the community. Last year in Stoke we fought a successful campaign, lobbying the chief constable and local politicians to get permission for a NF march withdrawn."

"We've had meetings with the chief fire officer expressing concern about the BNP. He has been sympathetic that we don't want anybody in the BNP in the fire service. Most Staffs city councillors – I was one for eight years – are sympathetic to this. Both Labour and Lib Dems agreed to distribute our leaflets as well as theirs at the general election.

"Both Stoke and Port Vale Football Clubs are supportive of our campaign. We've worked together,

seeking to get our message to children. Children come along to see stars and they deliver a clear message. When their idols say we don't like racists, it has a big effect. Last week there was a football match between the Asian community and the police force. We have lots of initiatives where we show that people work together in society."

"We have two BNP councillors in Stoke. They mislead with their proposals, claim that they will change things on the council and lie to the members of the public. We must ensure these racist thugs don't gain prominence. If they get a foot in the door, they'll try and exploit that. We must not allow them to. Everybody has a right to express a view – but by expressing racist views you've stepped over the line. We need to get these people off our streets."

FBU CONFERENCE RESOLUTION ON BNP MEMBERSHIP IN THE FIRE SERVICE

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a general statutory duty on Public Authorities, including Fire Authorities and their Chief Officers, to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination to promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

This Conference therefore calls on the Executive Council and its good offices to lobby the ODPM, CFA and the Employers' to implement policy that would not allow any member of a Fire Service to be a member of any organisation whose constitution, aims, objectives, policies or pronouncements, contradict the general statutory duty to promote race equality. Any such organisations specifically include the BNP.

The Executive Council should give progress reports via All Members circulars.

B&EEMM, as amended by Strathclyde, FBU Annual Conference 2005

WHO ARE THE BNP?

The thoughts of BNP Chairman Nick Griffin (in 1996)

The BNP needed to be perceived as “a strong, disciplined organisation with the ability to back up its slogan, ‘Defend Rights for Whites’, with well directed boots and fists. When the crunch comes, power is the product of force and will, not of rational debate.”

He said: “It is more important to control the streets of a city than its council chamber. If that is the sort of ‘unreasonable’ attitude that journalists and opponents try to use against us at election times, it shouldn’t bother us.”

Convicted politicians:

Nick Griffin (BNP Chairman). Received a two-year suspended sentence in April 1998 for inciting racial hatred. Griffin and BNP activist Mark Collett are awaiting trial in January on race-hate charges, which they deny. They are charged with using words or behaviour intended or likely to stir up racial hatred following the screening of a BBC documentary on the BNP in West Yorkshire.

Tony Lecomber (BNP Group Development Officer). In 1985 he was convicted on five counts for bomb-making offences under the Explosives Act, including possession of homemade hand-grenades and electronic timing devices. Sentenced to three years’ imprisonment. In 1991 he was sentenced to another three years for unlawful wounding for his part in an attack on a Jewish schoolteacher. He has a total of 12 convictions, mostly for violence.

Colin Smith (South East London organiser). Has (at the last count) 17 convictions for burglary, theft, stealing cars, possession of drugs and assaulting a police officer.

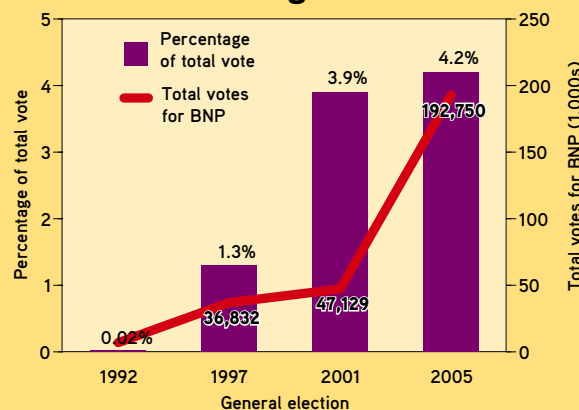
John Tyndall (founder of the BNP – later expelled – who died in July this year) had six convictions. He was jailed in 1962 for organising a military-style organisation. Four years later he was sent to prison for possession of a loaded gun. In 1986, he was convicted for incitement to racial hatred under the Public Order Act and sentenced to 12 months’ imprisonment.

Warren Bennett (Chief Steward). Convictions for football hooliganism. In 1998, he was deported from France with over 50 other Scottish hooligans, including several BNP members.

Steve Belshaw (East Midlands BNP organiser). Convicted in 1994 for assaulting a lawyer in Mansfield. At the time, Belshaw combined his BNP membership with activity in Combat 18 (an openly nazi semi-military organisation which carried out racist attacks including letter-bombs). Combat 18: the 1 is for A (as in Adolf) and the 8 is for H (as in Hitler).

David Copeland, the London nailbomber who killed three people, was a BNP member.

BNP votes in UK general elections



BNP EUROPEAN ELECTION RESULTS

	% of vote	total votes
1999	1.0%	102,644
2004	4.9%	808,200

The BNP received 8% in the European elections in Yorkshire and Humberside and 5.1% in the 2005 General Elections in West Midlands. Percentages relate to contested seats. The party fielded 119 candidates in the 2005 General election compared to 13 in 1992.

Source:
Unite Against Fascism

DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

PRISONS: Prison service head Martin Narey brought in a ban against prison officers being members of the BNP in 2002.

POLICE: “Under this policy, no member of the police service, whether police officer or police staff, may be a member of an organisation whose constitution, aims, objectives or pronouncements contradict the general duty to promote race equality. This specifically includes the British National Party. We anticipate that non-compliance will result in dismissal.” (Association of Chief Police Officers President Chris Fox, July 2004)

PROBATION SERVICE: “We take the view that if the national probation service wishes to retain the confidence of all the communities it serves then a similar prohibition [to the prison service] should apply to all probation staff.” (Chief Inspector of Probation Andrew Bridges, February 2005)

EDUCATION: “There is growing evidence that members of the BNP and other similar

organisations are using membership of trade unions and public sector professions to provide a cloak of respectability for their activities. NASUWT now believes the time is right for the DfES to act with regard to teachers’ terms and conditions to prevent them from being members of the BNP, Combat 18 and the National Front. Those who support racist and fascist agendas have no place in the teaching profession. (Chris Keates, general secretary of teachers’ union NASUWT, March 2005, who has written to Secretary of State Ruth Kelly to ask for her support)

CIVIL SERVICE: Members of the British National Party (BNP) and other far-right groups would be banned from working in the civil service, under radical plans being considered by the government. High-level discussions involving Sir John Gieve, permanent secretary at the Home Office, and other senior civil servants have taken place to discuss the move. (Personnel Today, March 2005)

Dangerous waters

PAUL Woolstenholmes, a former marine engineer at the Royal Navy, knows a thing or two about work at sea and the dangers that come with it. Now, as FBU National Officer responsible for health and safety, he's concerned that FBU members are made aware of them too.

"Firefighting at sea is highly dangerous. Incidents may be infrequent, but there is greater potential for multiple casualties, including fatalities. You have to be aware that you could be sent out to anything – from a luxury cruise liner to a tramp steamer or oil rig. Firefighting facilities on board will be in an unknown state of repair. Communications may be difficult. Danger is everywhere," says Paul.

Paul is leading a campaign to highlight to FBU members undertaking firefighting at sea just how vulnerable they are. The Union does not believe adequate health and safety, training, insurance and the necessary changes to conditions of service have been put in place for what is a highly dangerous activity. Brigades may call for volunteers to attend incidents in the North Sea, Irish Sea, English Channel or anywhere else off the UK coastline. If members volunteer to attend, they would be leaving themselves and their families vulnerable.

Firefighting at sea moved up the UK fire and rescue service agenda when the Government launched the Sea of Change initiative in 2003. The aim was to ensure that the UK Fire and Rescue Service, acting as a primary agent for the Department for Transport (DfT), was sufficiently prepared to be able to respond to a life-threatening marine incident involving fire, rescue or chemical incident on a vessel located at sea around the coast of the United Kingdom. There are 14 brigades that are Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG) members. The Fire Services Act 2004 appeared to give firefighting at sea further importance.

However, despite the efforts of the FBU, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and fire authorities have not made arrangements that accord with FBU policy and the best interests of Union members.

One key issue is insurance. A long established FBU policy requires no-fault insurance in respect to fire-

FBU members don't have to volunteer to fight fires at sea. It's highly dangerous and the proper safeguards are not in place. So why expose yourself and your family to unnecessary risk?

fighting at sea because incidents are particularly hazardous and because recovering compensation in case of injury or death through the legal process would give rise to particular complications. In many cases, members or their families would be left without compensation including cases of death or serious injury.

A claim for serious injuries or fatalities occurring as a result of an incident in the UK can be brought through the Union's solicitors based on the applicable UK legislation. However, the position is far more complex if an incident occurs at sea. Issues arise over the jurisdiction of the courts but, more particularly, ships often use flags of convenience such as the Bahamas and Panama. This may be partly because of weak legislation on workers rights, health and safety, etc. and the difficulties in enforcing any legal proceedings through such countries.

Says Paul Woolstenholmes: "Firefighters undertaking dangerous firefighting at sea activities – and their dependents – should not be exposed to the vagaries of risk arising from foreign ships and those using flags of convenience.

"There are similarities between this issue of insurance for firefighting at sea and the issue of insurance for terrorism," he says. "Under the cloak of modernisation, government and brigades appear to expect members to take on these new high-risk duties with untested and disputed health and safety arrangements. This combination exposes members to potential injuries and fatalities while at the same time brigades and government are failing to provide adequate insurance cover."

Health and safety is another major issue. Certain



PALEMPICS

167 died when the Piper Alpha oil rig in the North Sea off Aberdeen caught fire in July 1988

FIREFIGHTING IN UNCHARTERED SAFETY ENVIRONMENT

Shipping

There were **2,100 dead and missing** from 46 shipping disasters in 2004 (Swiss Re insurance)

"Flags of convenience (FOCs) have a particularly bad record. Countries sell the right to use their names to foreign ship operators. The ships become the sovereign territory of the FOC countries, that are legally responsible for the safety of the vessels and their seafarers. But nations that take these responsibilities seriously risk losing business to ones that don't... In 1997 the Seafarers' International Research Centre at Cardiff University estimated that there were **between 1,393 and 2,354 deaths at sea each year.**" (Dave Cockcroft, International Transport Workers Federation, 2003)

Offshore

"Although there have been improvements in health and safety offshore since the Piper Alpha disaster in 1988 the risks are ever-present – fire, explosion, release of gas and structural failure all have the potential to cause major loss of life ... This is a dynamic rapidly changing industry but with an ageing infrastructure and increasing cost pressures as the available oil and gas declines. These issues, together with the geographically isolated workforce, and the inherent hazards in working offshore, require high standards of management of health and safety."

551 dangerous occurrences were reported in 2004/2005, which is **21 more** than during 2003/2004, representing an increase of 3.8%; Main types of dangerous occurrences reported were hydrocarbon releases (44%), fail equipment offshore (21%) fail well (9%) and fire offshore (8%).

(Health and Safety Executive)

The Piper Alpha accident in the North Sea resulted in **167 fatalities**. Some accounts say that the explosion and fire released the equivalent energy of one fifth of the UK's annual energy consumption. Only 62 crewmen survived. By the time civil and military rescue helicopters reached

the scene, **flames over 100 metres high and visible 100 km away** prevented safe approach. Tharos, a specialist firefighting vessel, was able to approach the platform, but could not prevent its destruction. Two crew members from the Lowland Cavalier were killed when an explosion on the platform destroyed their fast rescue craft that had recovered several survivors from the water. There is controversy about whether there was sufficient time for more effective evacuation.

Health and Safety

The FBU policy on firefighting at sea contains specific requirements in respect of health and safety matters. Neither the MCA nor Fire Authority should expect members to volunteer or be encouraged to volunteer where those requirements are not met.

It would not be appropriate to compromise on the stringent requirements of the policy document. Firefighting at sea is highly dangerous. Incidents will be relatively infrequent. The hazards will be specific to incidents at sea. The potential for multiple casualties (fatal or otherwise) is heightened in respect of incidents at sea. When considering whether to volunteer, members will look to the Union's recommendation as to health and safety matters.

Internal Union Discipline/Disputes

In the event that Fire Authorities seek to implement firefighting at sea arrangements without agreement, the Union can ballot for industrial action which may be strike action or action short of a strike such as refusing to participate in or assist in firefighting at sea operations.

Alternatively, the Union can inform members that it is unable to advise them to undertake firefighting at sea due to health and safety, insurance or other similar reservations.

In addition, members acting in breach of FBU policy may be subject to internal union discipline in accordance with the procedures established by FBU Rules.

From legal advice to the FBU from Thompsons Solicitors

People were still getting off the platform several hours after the initial fires and explosions. The fire was eventually put out by a team led by famed firefighter Red Adair amid 80mph winds and 70-foot waves.

Good communications?

The **Firelink project** is not ... intended for use with Sea of Change operations. Sea of Change communications will be carried out primarily using VHF marine band frequencies for operations within 30 miles of the shore or by satellite communications for distant operations or on those occasions when VHF proves inadequate.

(Jim Fitzpatrick, Parliamentary Under Secretary, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 13 October 2005)

The tanker *Kyokuyo Maru* caught fire in a collision 25 kilometers off Owase City in central Japan this July. One sailor died, another was severely injured and five others were missing. The 697-ton *Kyokuyo Maru* tanker, carrying two million litres of benzene, collided with the *Nikko Maru*, a 499-ton chemical tanker carrying 1,000 tonnes of creosote. The area is prone to accidents as many vessels, mainly small boats, pass through the area of Mie prefecture.

brigades have suggested that, where the operations are regarded by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), as a "declared facility" this would be sufficient to satisfy the FBU policy on firefighting at sea. But, even if the MCA has credited a particular proposed arrangement safe, operational procedures must still be agreed between management and FBU officials. In the same way, any new duties under the Fire Services Act 2004 do not absolve employers of their statutory responsibility for

health and safety.

"At a time when many fire authorities are attempting to cut establishment levels under the IRMP process with detrimental health and safety implications," says Paul, "you have to question this drive by certain parts of the fire service to place new demands on an already overstretched workforce in one of the most dangerous working environments you can encounter, particularly given the failure to get the proper safeguards in place."

FOR more information and FBU advice on firefighting at sea contact your brigade or regional official (regional office details on back page)

SIMON GREEN, a firefighter at Basingstoke, was suspended by Chief Fire Officer Malcolm Eastwood in April 1999 following his attempt to organise an official trade union meeting.

An Employment Appeal Tribunal ruled on 22 November 2001 that Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service broke the law by victimising Simon and two other firefighters for carrying out trade union duties. While the two other firefighters were subject to a six-month discipline investigation, Hampshire fire service suspended Simon for 19 months for attempting to organise an official trade union meeting.

At the same time as the 2001 Employment Tribunal found that Simon had acted completely legally and above board – and had recommended “reconciliation” to “restore good industrial relations” to both parties – the fire authority informed him that they intended to reduce his pay by half, as he was still off work with stress caused by their actions. Then, on December 22 that year, Simon was fired.

Simon says: “Basingstoke was an active branch, fighting campaigns against cuts to fire cover. Whenever FBU members from Hampshire went to a demo, the minibuses were full of firefighters from Basingstoke. We became a thorn in the management’s side. And we became a target. And that included me – I was the branch chair of Basingstoke.”

“The management were notoriously vicious. I believe deputy CFO Tim Murrell was brought in to push through radical reforms to the fire service. One of the councilors was a leading exponent of modernisation on the NJC. They were always trying on stuff outside of the Grey Book – Hampshire fire brigade was a guinea pig.

After Simon was suspended, Basingstoke branch didn’t have any meetings for two years, says Simon. “From the most active branch in the brigade, almost overnight, it became the least active. Management had done a good job. They shut the Union down.”

Brigade management, meanwhile, exerted pressure on employees not to have any contact with Simon. He was isolated. Long-time friend and work colleague, Lud Ramsey, now chair of FBU Hampshire and B&EMM rep for region 12, says: “There was total fear in Hampshire. No-one was to talk to Simon. Watch members were so intimidated, they didn’t even ring Simon.

“I’ve known Simon for at least 15 years. My daughter and Simon’s daughter know each other for years too. They go to the same school. How could the brigade be saying I was not even to talk to him. When I saw him at the school gates or in the playground, was I supposed to ignore him? The brigade treated him totally despicably. They made him out like the devil.”

Yet after the successful Employment Tribunal appeal, Simon thought the worst was over. On 22 December 2001, the last Friday before Christmas, the fire authority called Simon to Winchester Castle, an imposing historic building.

“I thought that this was the point they were going to negotiate my way back to work. I took Cheryl my wife and Pete Miller as my FBU rep. Instead they sacked me.”

FBU member Simon Green was victimised by Hampshire Fire Authority for his trade union activities. He was suspended and then sacked. This summer, more than six years afterwards, Simon finally closed this painful chapter in his life, and is now building a new career working for the labour and progressive movement.

Back on his own two feet

Richard Arthur, the solicitor from Thompsons who represented Simon from the start says: “Simon was victimised by the service for carrying out his trade union duties. All he did was ensure that FBU members were receiving representation, yet he was accused of interfering with witnesses.

“He was served with notice of disciplinary investigation relating to allegations from nine years previously. One year later those charges were withdrawn.

“As the Employment Tribunal said: ‘It is also extraordinary that the service should go back as early as 1990 to produce allegations which under any disciplinary procedure should have been dealt with a long time ago. It suggests to us that the service was doing all it could to continue the suspension for as long as possible, which had the effect of excluding Mr Green from his trade union activities. Moreover ... this was clearly the purpose of the service’.

“Having gone through all of this, Simon was then dismissed on grounds of capability.”

The blow was more than Simon could take. “I was ill. My family was falling apart. The mortgage wasn’t getting paid. I was staring at the abyss. So we went onto a campaign to raise the case within the FBU and to put pressure on the fire authority.”

Cheques arrived from all over the country and nearly £5,000 was raised. “That money was very important. But if you’ve been victimised, if you’ve been dismissed, you feel very isolated. As much as the cheques, the letters of support that accompanied them were important. A letter is priceless.”

Thanks to the campaign, FBU members and officials sent letters to management from across the UK. They demanded that the victimisation had to stop. “The campaign made everyone aware of what Hampshire was doing and how nasty they were,” says Simon.

‘If you’ve been victimised, if you’ve been dismissed, you feel very isolated. As much as the cheques, the letters of support that accompanied them were important. A letter is priceless.’



With the particular help of Lud and the B&EMM committee, the issue was brought before the FBU Executive Council. They decided to support him as a victimised member, paying him a firefighter's wage.

Above: Simon (left) together with Lud; below, editing a video



'The important thing is that you must never give up, however bad it gets'

"The Union's decision to support me financially saved me. It gave me the time and space to recover. Otherwise I'd have had to have taken literally any job that I could get. That would have broken me."

Since then, Simon has continued helping with FBU campaigns while learning a new trade, which he has put to the service – for little or no income – of the Union and the wider labour and progressive movement.

Says Lud: "Simon used that time to get active again in the FBU. Simon helped me on a whole range of issues, including a high profile case on the dismissal of another FBU member. He was my right-hand man."

Adds Simon: "I tried to give something back. People know my experience. I had a constant stream of fire-fighters through my kitchen, asking: 'This happened to me. What should I do?' My experience was valued by a number of members. I used the time to get my confidence back and to help the trade union movement. I've had to rebuild my life. I've set up a business – not paying myself. I'm nearly back on my own two feet."

Simon has been making films for organisations such as the National Union of Journalists. He lectures on film and he is now involved in event production and management. Says Simon: "I've used my new skills in the anti-war movement and I try to get FBU issues out into the wider labour and progressive movement. At a recent gig I did, I helped arrange for Lud to speak on how the FBU was fighting the BNP in the Hampshire fire service."

Despite finding a new vocation, Simon remains deeply attached to the fire service and the friendships he's left behind. And he feels robbed of a career, including its financial benefits.

This summer with the help of FBU solicitors Thompsons, he came to an out of court settlement with Hampshire fire authority of £10,000. But the losses to his pension alone are in the region of £200,000.

"I was a good firefighter. I'm not being modest. I loved my job. I was highly qualified and it's all gone. I joined as a firefighter when I was 19. This is my twentyfifth year of service. The loss of my career in the fire service – and the money that went with it – is still an issue in my family life. I will have to work until I'm old. I must build my new job and not feel bitter about it. I'm looking forward and not back. I am getting over it."

The local union is getting over the experience too. "We have a fighting, active trade union once again in Hampshire," says Lud. "We are a force in the region. If management tried to do what they did then today – they wouldn't even think about it. People came back stronger. Our recent campaign against the BNP is a case in point."

So what lessons does Simon draw from his experience? "This is not a story about me the individual. This was an attack on the Union and every single FBU member. As an active FBU member, things can get very rough. Management hung me out to dry. They tried to grind me down. The important thing is that you must never give up, however bad it gets."

"The only way I did that was as part of a team, and I'd like to thank everybody in the Union who stuck by me and supported me, especially my branch who elected me honorary chair: a purely symbolic act, but it meant a great deal to me. That's the power of collective activity."

■ For more information on what Simon Green is up to visit: www.eventful.org.uk or email simon@eventful.org.uk

Lies, damn lies and

INTEGRATED 'RE-CLASSIFICATION' MANAGEMENT PLANNING. (IT'S STILL IRMP!)

FBU national IRMP advisor
Dick Pearson on how fire
authority fire death statistics
are being used to justify cuts

FOLLOWING LAST month's feature 'How Many Firefighters does it take ...' individual FBU members have been contacting us direct with further examples of the lengths some brigades are going to in an attempt to justify their IRMP proposals.

The FBU treats these contacts in the strictest confidence. Some members who have spoken to us are working at senior levels in brigades; in CFS, fire investigation and operational roles. Some of the examples they have told us about you may already have experience of in your own brigade; others may surprise you. From a professional perspective you may judge some of the examples to be absurd. But these are actual examples.

Let's not forget the motivation behind what is going on. IRMP has to produce the intended results to justify its introduction in its current form. Consequently if you are proposing to change something in a brigade you should be able to justify it with evidence. Of course if you've got any doubt about the likely strength of your evidence, well you simply "re-classify".

Perhaps at this point, to avoid any confusion, we should state that the 'R' in the current government IRMP process stands for 'Risk', and not 'Re-Classification'.

But lets also recognise that everyone needs a helping

TOP 10 IRMP RE-CLASSIFICATIONS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 fire death doesn't count where the fire started somewhere other than the home; | 7 installed; |
| 2 fire death doesn't count if the person dies as a result of a fire in the home that was started deliberately; | 8 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) where you're killed escaping from the fire; |
| 3 fire death doesn't count where it occurs as a result of a fire in the home where the cause of the fire is not established; | 9 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) where multiple deaths occur; |
| 4 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) where alcohol in the body is above a certain level; | 10 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) if the brigade classifies the death as not preventable for any other reason; |
| 5 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) where non prescription drugs are in the body; | 10 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) where the incident is recorded as a False Alarm Good Intent. |
| 6 fire death doesn't count (even a fire death in the home as a result of an accidental fire) where no working smoke detector was | |

HOLD on a minute – you're not serious about numbers 8 & 10 ... are you ...?

statistics...



hand in life now and then. Statistics are no different – if they aren't telling you what you want to hear, just help them along a little (or a lot depending on how radical your proposals are).

Under IRMP the two main areas you must concentrate on to prove the effectiveness of the system are reductions in primary (property) fires and reductions in fire deaths. Below is a quick guide to the top 10 ways of making what's happening in the real world look a little more palatable in your IRMP.

IF YOU WANT TO GET NOTICED... DIE IN A CROWD

HAVE you noticed how the media focus on those events where there is multiple loss of life? If 3 or 4 people are killed in a house fire, it may even make the national news. But some brigades are adopting an 'alternative' approach in their IRMP statistics.

They postulate that if multiple deaths occur in a house fire (even in a house fire where the cause of fire has been established as being accidental) then because these deaths disproportionately inflate their fire death figures they should be ignored; that if these deaths hadn't occurred then the brigades figures would look much better!

That's certainly true. The figures would be better if the deaths hadn't occurred, although this is cold comfort indeed for the relatives, or for the people who actually died in the fire.

Several years ago Mick McGaghey, the General Secretary of Scottish Miners attended the FBU Annual Conference in Bridlington as a guest of the Union. Commenting on press reporting of multiple fatalities he told Conference that for any notice to be taken when workers die, they had to die in a crowd. He clearly wasn't counting on the interpretation of IRMP that is being adopted in some brigades.

WHEN IS A FIRE NOT A FIRE ...?

HOW could anybody die in a fire which the brigade has classified as a False Alarm Good Intent? Well here are a couple of reported examples of the way in which some brigades are attempting to record incidents. We'll leave you to work out where this could ultimately lead in the relentless drive to re-classify IRMP success.

Incident 1

THREE large rooms of a hospital smoke logged to such a degree that 20 people had to be evacuated from the area. Smoke so thick firefighters could not see to the other side of an 8m x 8m room. PPV had to be used. The cause was burning food in a toaster. The Brigade classified the incident as a FAGI and not an FDR1.

Incident 2

FIRE involving an industrial sized oven in a nursing home. Smoke logging of kitchen and dining room to such an extent that all staff and residents had to be evacuated. PPV had to be used. The Brigade classified the incident as a FAGI and not an FDR1.

Of course if you record an incident as a FAGI instead of an FDR1 you will appear to be driving down the number of recorded property fires that are occurring in your brigade. The reality is that nothing is changing in the real world – the incidents are still occurring – you're just recording

No sane person would attempt to argue that the recently reported reductions in primary fires aren't good news. The nagging doubt however is the accuracy of the figures reported

them differently!

No sane person would attempt to argue that the recently reported reductions in primary fires aren't good news. The nagging doubt however is the accuracy of the figures reported under 'Integrated Re-Classification Management Planning'.

You have to wonder if in the future an incident where there is a fatality caused by the products of combustion of a chip pan fire which has burnt itself out before the arrival of firefighters will also be classified as a FAGI?

And in answer to the question "When is a fire not a fire ...? – when it's a statistic!

Endowment problems

Each year the FBU handles thousands of legal problems on behalf of members. Here is just one of the issues that has cropped up.

I bought an endowment in 1992 and I have recently discovered it will not meet the expected sum and there will be a shortfall. This was not explained to me properly at the time and the risks were not discussed. Is there anything I can do about this?

FIRSTLY, if you believe that you have been miss-sold an endowment policy you will need to be able to show that the policy you were sold was not the best option for you to have taken at the time, based upon the figures presented and your financial circumstances, although the advisor told you otherwise. Also if it was never explained that there were investment risks and the policy eventually does not perform as well as you expected, you may be able to take some legal action. The advisor should have explained how your endowment would be invested and explain the risks involved and that it's a long term commitment which may not be worth as much if it was cashed in early. The fact that the amount you would get back depends on the performance of the policy is something which should have been discussed in order for you to have made an informed decision in taking out the policy. If you were guaranteed that the policy would pay off the mortgage and leave you with a surplus amount or a bonus, this may be significant grounds for complaint also but you would need to be able to prove this, preferably in writing, to give your complaint further strength.

You should first put the complaint in writing to the endowment provider and ask for clarification of the projected figures. If the problem is not resolved satisfactorily through initial contact, you should then consider going through their internal complaints procedure. This procedure must be followed before the problem can be referred onto the Financial Services Authority (FSA). They run a free and independent service to help resolve disputes with financial service providers. They must be contacted within 6 months of the final correspondence with the financial service provider. Ultimately, you can take the matter to the Financial Ombudsman Service, for which there is a 6 year time limit which starts from the date when the 'damage' could have been reasonably known of.

FSA Helpline: 0845 606 1234, www.fsa.gov.uk

FINANCIAL OMBUDSMAN SERVICE Helpline: 0845 080 1800 www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk



Glenn Robbins (r), Dartford White Watch, receives his 25 year badge from Ernie Thornton



Dave Millett (r), Green Watch Clapham, receives his 25yr badge from Mick Hickson, Group Sec. London FBU



Trevor Garner (r), Green Watch Clapham, receives his 25yr pin from Mick Hickson, Group Sec. London FBU



Ernie Wells (r), Blue Watch Clapham, receives his 25yr pin from Gordon Simpson, Branch Sec. London FBU

25-YEAR BADGES



Roger Green (green watch) receives his 25 year badge from branch official Nigel Mace (right) at Ely fire station



Robert Davies (green watch) receives his 25 year badge from branch official Nigel Mace (right) at Ely fire station



Station officer Graham Penny, Red Watch, Tayside, (l) receives his 25 year badge from Health and Safety rep Terry Whyte



Branch Sec Brother Deacon (left) presents Bro Wallace (R) with 25 year badge at Downtown Preston Lancashire



Martin Crawford (green watch) receives his 25 year badge from branch official Nigel Mace (right) at Ely fire station



Mick Johns (l) receives his 25 year badge from Officer branch secretary Andy Eades at Hampstead FRS HQ



Alan Fleming (l) receives his 25 year badge from Paul Black, Altens Fire Station Aberdeen

Please send your photographic prints or digital picture files to: Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE or firefighter@fbu.org.uk (Please note that inkjet prints from digital pictures reproduce very poorly). Please include **FULL DETAILS** for every picture – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/watch etc; where they are in the picture (e.g.: left to right ...); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where and when it was taken.



Alan Barrie (l) receives his 25 year badge from Paul Black Altens Fire Station Aberdeen



Ashie Reid (l) receives his 25 year badge from Paul Black Altens Fire Station Aberdeen



Ken Mcduff (2nd left) and Tudor Thomas (2nd right) with Red watch, Cefn Forrest fire stn, receive their 25 year badges from South Wales Brigade Sec John Jenkins



Ian Burns (right) of Blue Watch, Kirkintilloch Fire Station receives his 25 year badge from Bro Chris McDaid, Strathclyde

HAVE YOUR SAY Firefighter magazine welcomes letters from members. Letters should relate to articles in the magazine. Please include full postal address, telephone number and reference to relevant article. We may edit letters. Please send them to: firefighter@fbu.org.uk or Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE

0808 100 6061 FBU

freephone legal advice line



THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS



The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues. For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.

For further help and advice on union services contact your regional office

Regional Office	Address	Telephone No.	Email address
Region 1 Scotland	52 St Enoch Square, Glasgow, Scotland, G1 4AA	0141 221 2309	01rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 2 N. Ireland	14 Bachelors Walk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 1XJ	02892 664622	02rs@fbu.org
Region 3 Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	1 Carlton Court, 5th Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0AZ	0191 487 4142	03rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 4 Yorkshire and Humberside	9 Marsh Street, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0AG	0113 288 7000	04rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 5 Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Isle of Man, Cumbria, Merseyside, Cheshire	The Lighthouse, Lower Mersey St, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 2AL	0151 357 4400	05rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 6 Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire	6 Bridgford Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 6AB	0115 982 7202	06gen@fbu.org.uk
Region 7 West Midlands, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Hereford and Worcester, Salop	195/7 Halesowen Rd, Old Hill, West Midlands, B64 6HE	01384 413633	07rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 8 Mid and West Wales, North Wales, South Wales	4 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, Bridgend, CF 35 5LJ	01656 867910	08rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 9 Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk	28 Atlantic Square, Station Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2TL	01376 521521	10ra@fbu.org.uk 09rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 10 London	John Horner Mews, Frome Street, Islington, London, N1 8PB	020 7359 3638	london@fbu.org.uk
Region 11 Kent, Surrey, Sussex	Fire Station, Coldharbour Road, Northfleet, Kent, DA11 8NT	01474 320473	11rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 12 Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Isle of Wight	The Fire Station, St Mary Street, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2HE	01494 513034	12rs@fbu.org.uk
Region 13 Cornwall, Somerset, Devon, Avon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset	158 Muller Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9RE	0117 935 5132	13rs@fbu.org.uk

on the move?

office@fbu.org.uk
www.fbu.org.uk



Advise your Brigade Membership Secretary of any change of address and Head Office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.